

District Public Defenders Office for the 11th Judicial District

The Public Defenders Conference was created by the Tennessee State General Assembly and signed into law by the governor in 1989. The Conference serves the entire state by judicial districts. Hamilton County is the 11th Judicial District. Each district has an elected Public Defender who serves an eight year term. Our office operates as a law firm with 21 additional attorneys working as assistant public defenders. The support staff include three investigators, a social worker, an office manager and three secretaries. The current Public Defender, Steve Smith, was elected in 2014 and again in 2022. Our office is located at 720 Cherry Street which is one block from the Courts Building.

The Public Defenders Office represents indigent people who are alleged to have committed criminal offenses in violation of Tennessee State law. Judges appoint our office following a finding of indigence. The case is then assigned to a specific assistant public defender within our office who will zealously represent that client moving forward.

We practice in all municipal courts in Hamilton County, Hamilton County General Sessions Court, Hamilton County Juvenile Court, Hamilton County Criminal Courts, the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals and the Tennessee Supreme Court. In addition certain lawyers in our office are assigned to participate in the Hamilton County Drug Recovery Court and Mental Health Court.